

# Preventing Plagiarism

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# Objectives

- Discuss what plagiarism is, in practice
- Discuss some good practice in designing assessment
- Discuss Keele's policy

# 'Plagiarism'

- Passing off someone else's work or ideas as one's own, without giving credit
- Literary theft, cheating, copying
- Including:
  - Plagiarising published/web sources
  - Colluding (not collaborating)
  - Fraudulent authorship

# A growing, changing problem

- Increasingly a public issue
- Electronic writing makes it easier
- Web documents give more opportunity, cheat essay banks, essay commissioning
- Internet communication widens the geographical scope
- Larger student cohorts, worsening staff/student ratios (often)
- More time pressure on some students

# Layers of the problem

1. For individual **students** it is a failure of learning.
  - Poor writing skills, poor time management
  - Poor scholarship
2. For **staff** it wastes time checking, confirming ...
3. For **institutions** it endangers academic standards, scholarly values and practice
  - Assessment & disciplinary procedures: marking, exam boards, interviews etc.
  - QA, regulations, and legislative context

# New Regulations 2005-6

## Regulation 8, part 12.8

- Minor offence may be:
  - Poor referencing, unattributed quotations, inappropriate paraphrasing, incorrect or incomplete citations
  - Several sentences copied & unattributed
- Major offence may be:
  - Copying multiple paragraphs
  - Copying much of a peer's work with or without consent
  - Submitting part of the work of another module

Where do you draw the line?  
(lowest acceptable number)

1

2

3

4

5

6

# Causes of plagiarism

- “Common knowledge” varies for level, school & discipline
- Different attitudes between cultures, disciplines, peer approval
- More likely by male, young, pressurized, alienated students
- Teacher attitude is lax, subject uninteresting
- Some subjects: sciences, business, law
- For the unscrupulous, risk of being caught

## Elements of the solution

1. Student expectations and understanding
2. Provide guidance & teaching repeatedly
3. Set a good example in teaching materials
4. 'Design it out' of assessment →
5. Clear regulations and penalties applied consistently across the institution
6. Supported by efficient detection, manual or computer-based

## Good Practice Guide (Jude Carroll & Jon Appleton on the JISC PAS web site)

Design it out of assessment:

1. New assessment tasks each year
2. With learning outcomes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation not understanding or knowledge application
3. With multiple artefacts or solutions
4. With intermediate, cumulative tasks, that needn't be marked
5. With practice for good writing

## Activity: design an assessment

- Look at the guidance
- Design one assessment (individually)
- Compare notes

# Positive culture of scholarship

- A proactive, research-led, scholarly culture
- Link teaching/assessment to discipline research and scholarship
  - Content
  - Process
- Demonstrate good practice in teaching materials
- ...

# References and sources

Carroll, J. 2002 *A handbook for deterring plagiarism in higher education*, Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development

Higher Education Research Forum 2004: The relationship between research and teaching in HEIs  
[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/uploads/Forum's\\_advice\\_to\\_Ministers\\_on\\_Teaching\\_and\\_Research\[1\].pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/uploads/Forum's_advice_to_Ministers_on_Teaching_and_Research[1].pdf)

JISC Plagiarism Advisory Service  
<http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/> including *A guide to good practice* by Jude Carroll & Jon Appleton

LTSN-ICS workshop, Dealing with plagiarism, Warwick, 11-12 April 2002  
<http://www.ics.ltsn.ac.uk/events/plagiarism/>

Park, C. 2003 In other (people's) words: plagiarism by university students – literature and lessons, *Assessment and Evaluation in HE* 28 (5) 471-488

Further resources will be found at  
[www.keele.ac.uk/depts/aa/landt/links/plagiarism.htm](http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/aa/landt/links/plagiarism.htm)